

MEDIA - PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

Rhode Island Department of Health- May 24, 2006

This checklist¹ provides guidance for editors and publishers in developing and improving influenza pandemic response and preparation plans. These steps are not in chronological order. More information about pandemic flu is available at www.pandemicflu.gov. Similar plans should be developed for maintaining operations during emergencies that involve destruction of property and equipment, loss of utilities and impassability of roads and bridges. This is called an “All-Hazards approach”. Any planning that you do for Pandemic Influenza would also be useful for any other type of large-scale emergency.

An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges that people have little or no immunity to and for which there may be no vaccine. The disease spreads easily through person-to-person contact and causes serious illness or death. It can sweep across the country and around the world very quickly. At present, avian (bird) flu — H5N1 — is spread by birds. It is not spread through person-to-person contact. However, there is concern that it may mutate to become easily spread person-to-person. At that point, it could become a pandemic of influenza. In the event of a global disease outbreak, the news media will play a critical role before, during, and after the emergency, by providing the public with information regarding vaccination, treatment, self-care, and other recommended containment measures.

The main contact for Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) for the State of Rhode Island is John Aucott, Director, Homeland Security, Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency. He can be contacted at 401-946-9996.

| 1. Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your organization and its mission | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Completed | In Progress | Not Started | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Review the organization’s mission to determine what essential services must be preserved in the event of a pandemic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Review the organization’s mission to determine which procedures would have to be altered in the event of a pandemic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Determine the potential impact of a pandemic on outside resources your organization depends on (newspaper distribution process, printing, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Outline the communication resources and organizational structure you would use to alert, communicate with staff and key stakeholders during a pandemic when staffing is reduced, including key contacts with multiple back-ups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Test your response and coordination using a drill or exercise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Work with the state health department to develop key messages to use during the outbreak to provide information to the public in a timely and accurate manner (Maria Wah-Fitta: 401-222-3998) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use the International Federation of Journalists and the International News Safety Institute’s safety codes for journalists to develop plans for making assignments to keep reporters out of harm’s way |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Obtain current contact information for key health and other state public information officers (Maria Wah-Fitta: 401-222-3998) |

¹ Information from this checklist is based on Newsroom Planning for Crisis Coverage and Bioterrorism, A Journalist’s Guide to Covering Bioterrorism. (Radio and Television News Directors Foundation; “Self Care for the Media,” Terrorism and Other Public Health Emergencies: A Reference Guide for the Media. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.

| 2. Communicate with your staff, and educate people in the communities you serve | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Completed | In Progress | Not Started | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Participate in Technical Briefing Conference Calls offered by subject-matter experts (Maria Wah-Fitta: 401-222-3998) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Provide individual and family preparedness guidance and information to staff to be self-sustaining during an emergency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Disseminate information to the public to help them prepare for a pandemic influenza outbreak. (Checklists, frequently asked questions, and other information are available at www.pandemicflu.gov) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Work with the state health department to make sure all reporters are briefed about pandemic flu to enable effective coverage in the event of an outbreak. (Check HEALTH's Website http://www.healthri.gov for current information) |
| 3. Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your staff and the communities you serve | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Establish mechanisms to cover essential tasks if a significant proportion of your staff were ill or caring for their seriously ill family members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Think about providing child-care support for your staff , so they can keep working even if school and child-care services are cancelled. |
| 4. Set up/review/clarify policies to follow during a pandemic | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Establish policies and practices for preventing the spread of influenza at the worksite (requiring respiratory hygiene in places and situations with public interaction, spacing workers at least 3 ft. apart) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Review assignments and policies to enable and allow telecommuting, facilitate meetings through conference calling to reduce transmission of infection |
| 5. Allocate resources to protect your staff and persons in the community you serve | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Provide for sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (hand-hygiene products, tissues, etc.) at convenient locations for staff. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Enhance communications and information technology needed to support employee telecommuting where possible |
| 6. Coordinate with external organizations | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Consider sharing resources with agencies and companies with whom you normally compete. Develop agreements in advance. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Stay involved in the pandemic influenza planning efforts led by the state. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Participate in available drills, exercises, and briefings. This will increase your level of comfort about what you can expect from the state in terms of communication during an emergency. |